My Dream Career: Considerations

Carol Welch-Baril, a neuromuscular therapist, once said, “movement is a medicine for creating change in a person’s physical, emotional, and mental states” (Baril). Growing up, I was deeply affected when my friends or siblings were not able to participate in everyday activities due to injuries. If it were not for my experience with physical therapy and knowledge of my parents’ experiences with it, I never would have considered becoming a physical therapist. The field of physical therapy will allow me to merge my experiences with my compassion for others, nurturing nature, and social skills.

My interest in this career began to slowly kindle in middle and high school when I started to experience many physical setbacks due to my active sports life and medical condition, scoliosis. Throughout my treatment for two different injuries, an interest and eventual passion began to form as my appointments left an impression on me.

My first encounter with therapy was due to a basketball injury, a strained Achilles tendon. During my appointments, I got to interact with other patients, build relationships and engage in mutual encouragement as we progressed in therapy. This experience opened my eyes to a profession that works closely with people and is invested in improving their quality of life. When I reflected on my visits, I recognized the characteristics that I had in common with many of the therapists and assistants such as: being supportive, patient, compassionate, adaptable, and a multitasker. However, my decision to pursue a career in physical therapy was not solidified until I received treatment for my scoliosis.

During my treatment, I noticed the encouraging behavior the therapists exuded and the genuine interest they showed in my life and well-being. Additionally, I observed the social aspect of being a therapist. Since I was young, I have loved meeting, learning about, and helping new people. The incorporation of constant social interaction in this field piqued my interest. Opportunities to connect with people and make a significant impact on their life appealed to me. I felt my communication skills would be put to good use in this field.

Therapy was such a significant part of my life for so many years that I began to strongly consider pursuing the profession. I understand the mind, struggles, and fears of a patient, having been one myself; therefore, I will be able to contribute a unique perspective to the profession. In addition to my own experiences, I gained a new perspective observing my parents go through their physical therapy.

My father tore his rotator cuff, and after surgery, required extensive physical therapy to restore a full range of motion. My mother had an ankle injury and had to wear an orthopedic boot. Once healed physical therapy was necessary to help her walk properly again. My family has always meant the world to me, and as they get older, they tend to become more susceptible to accidents. I want to be there for them to ensure they can enjoy their lives in the best possible physical condition. Not only do I want to be there for my family, but the empathetic characteristic I possess creates a desire to be there for others.

My desire is that other families will find comfort knowing their loved ones are receiving the best

possible care and can enjoy spending time with them without the constant stress of untreated injuries. To provide this service for my family as well as others, I plan to earn a Doctor of Physical Therapy Degree. Although I am currently in my senior year of high school, I know what prerequisites are required. In the fall, I will begin my coursework at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College to obtain my associate's degree. During this time, I intend to shadow a physical therapist and intern at a clinic during the summer to gain first-hand experience and knowledge.

My first choice would be to work with my previous physical therapist, Dr. Keith Ganey, at North Bay Therapy. Upon completion of this degree, I will transfer to the University of Southern Alabama, and receive my bachelor's degree in Kinesiology. Next, I will attend physical therapy school, after which I will take and pass the National Physical Therapy Examination to become certified to work in the career field. The hard work will be worth it, and I am looking forward to the different places that this profession will take me, as well as the people that I will connect with. I am committed to becoming a physical therapist to help others, in addition to my family, to ensure that they have access to the same care that I received when I was young. This profession would enable me to use my social, empathetic, and nurturing nature. Aside from the financial gain, this career will provide me with a fulfilling job and allow me to give back in a meaningful way. Beginning in the fall, I look forward to starting my journey to fulfilling my dream.